

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on the Judiciary**

**Washington, DC 20515-6216**  
**One Hundred Ninth Congress**

January 13, 2005

The Honorable J. Kenneth Blackwell  
Ohio Secretary of State  
180 East Broad Street, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Secretary Blackwell:

Attached for your review and response, please find a comprehensive Report regarding Ohio election law irregularities prepared by the House Judiciary Committee Minority Staff. Given the importance of election reform, and the key role Ohio has played in recent elections, I believe it is imperative that you, as the leading election official in Ohio, provide Congress with your reactions to the attached report, including in particular the factual and legal conclusions and legislative recommendations set forth therein.

I recognize that in the past you have been unwilling to respond to any inquiries regarding the irregularities in the Ohio presidential election or your office's role in them. However, I am now hopeful that since Congress has certified the results of the electoral college, that you will be more forthcoming in assisting Congress in developing a record and legislation that will allow the nation to avoid a repeat of the voting irregularities reported in your state.

In this regard, it is important to recognize that voting reforms are now supported by key members on both sides of the aisle. House Minority Leader, Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) observed during the House debates during last week's electoral challenge:

As elected officials, we have a solemn responsibility to improve our election system and its administration. We cannot be here again 4 years from now discussing the failings of the 2008 election. ...Our very democracy depends again on the confidence of the American people and the integrity of our electoral system. 151 CONG. REC. H108 (daily ed. Jan. 6, 2005) (statement of Rep. Pelosi).

Rep. Bob Ney (R-OH), Chairman of the House Administration Committee, agreed, stating:

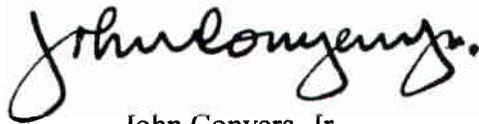
I know there are some problems obviously with this election. They are not frivolous. . . . There is no such thing as a perfect election. . . . The question, then, is not whether or not mistakes were made. Of course they were. . . . We must always be seeking ways to improve the process. 151 CONG. REC. H107 (daily ed. Jan. 6, 2005) (statement of Rep. Ney).

The Honorable J. Kenneth Blackwell  
January 13, 2005  
Page 2

I hope that you too will recognize the need to insure that every eligible citizen in the state of Ohio and our nation as a whole is given the unfettered right to vote. If Americans can be fighting and dying to make sure every vote is counted in Afghanistan and Iraq, the least we can do as public officials is make sure our own voters are not disenfranchised.

Please be advised that I have issued this request to the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Board of Elections for each county in the state of Ohio in order to obtain their relevant assistance as well. Please respond to me at your earliest convenience, and by no later than January 27 if at all possible, through Perry Apelbaum or Ted Kalo of my Judiciary Committee staff, 2142 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515 (tel. 202-225-6504, fax 202-225-4423).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Conyers, Jr." in a cursive style.

John Conyers, Jr.  
Ranking Member

Enclosures

cc: The Hon. F. James Sensenbrenner  
Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary